

## History of Hamilton Crossing

The Cumberland Farms convenience store and expanded Gulf gasoline station, built in 2015, at the northern corner of Bay Road and Walnut Rd., is the latest change to this busy intersection, once known as Hamilton Crossing. The name developed in the 1840s when the Eastern Railroad line was extended across Main Street (*now Bay Road*) on its way to Portland, ME from Salem.

The single-story, convenience store (4,650 sq. ft.), has 16 parking spaces, exterior patio seating, and offers various beverages and types of prepared food. Unlike the previous Gulf station, the Cumberland Farms building does not have vehicle service bays.

At the front of the store there are three gasoline dispensers, which are supplied with fuel from two 20,000-gal, double-wall, gas tanks, buried below ground, on the north side of the lot.

The previous Gulf gas station, on the corner was completely removed in November 2014. The station's pumps and service building were on the north end of the lot, facing toward Bay Road. The area at the south end of the lot was open and was where the fuel tanks were buried.

The building of a gas station, at this location, was the idea of former Hamilton selectman Everett Foss Haley. In October 1965, Haley contacted the town to obtain permission for the project. There was, from some townspeople, resistance to this move citing that with regard to the area's beauty, "a gas station would not serve the town's best interests."<sup>51, 52</sup>

Some of those opposed to a gas station believed there would be traffic problems. The Haley property, 8 Walnut St., only had an entrance on Bay Road: however, the gas station plan called for a second entrance on Walnut Street.<sup>15</sup>

The town granted a special permit for the gasoline station, as established in a new zoning by-law, with appropriate conditions to promote safety and to maintain the appearance of the neighborhood. Among the conditions was for the new owner to plant shrubs in a small area at the corner of Main and Walnut, the preservation of several trees (*including a horse chestnut and a maple*), and the planting of a row of evergreen trees on the north side of the property (*abutting 161 Bay Rd.*).<sup>40</sup>



**Gulf Oil gas station** and repair garage store, built in 1966, was replaced, in 2015, by a Cumberland Farms convenience store and expanded gasoline station (below right) .

Photo, J. Hauck, 2013

In March 1966, Haley and his daughter, Barbara Paradis sold the property (59,360 sq. ft., 1.36 acre) to Gulf Oil.<sup>11</sup> Nine months later, on Dec. 28, 1966, the Gulf gas station opened. David Rodman of Lynnfield was the first operator.<sup>54</sup>

Prior to the erection of the gas station, with its utilitarian design, the lot was a residential and farming property for more than three hundred years. The town changed the zoning to commercial in 1964.<sup>58</sup>

The property's frontage on Bay Road was about 172 ft. and on Walnut Street it was 141 ft. On The northeast side, which was about 270 ft., was the house of Alden and Abbie Southwick, living on the first floor and Abbie's sister, Pearl M. Barrett, on the second floor. At the back of the property on Walnut Street, there was the Patch family.<sup>11, 55</sup>

A two-story, colonial design, 8 Walnut sat diagonally on the property facing toward the corner of Main Street and Walnut Street. Behind it, there was a large barn, which Haley rented, for many years, to John Brumby, who repaired old cars.<sup>55</sup>

Haley, who was called Chuck, for many years had a large vegetable garden behind his house. Also, he raised turkeys,<sup>55</sup> on of many in the town.

Haley and his daughter, Barbara, acquired the 8 Walnut St.. in 1957, following the death of Doris E. (Clark) Haley, on Apr. 3, 1957.<sup>30</sup>

In 1953, during the time the Haleys lived at what is

now 121 Bay Rd., Hamilton, wanting a more rural sounding name, changed the road name from Main Street. Previous names for the road include Bay Road, County Road, and originally, it was The Way to Ipswich. It also was designated Rte. 1a, in the early 1930s, when the state built Rte. 1: roads running somewhat parallel became an alternate county route, i.e., 1a.

Chuck Haley increased the size of the property, by about 9,000 sq. ft., in September 1947, when the Boston and Maine Railroad

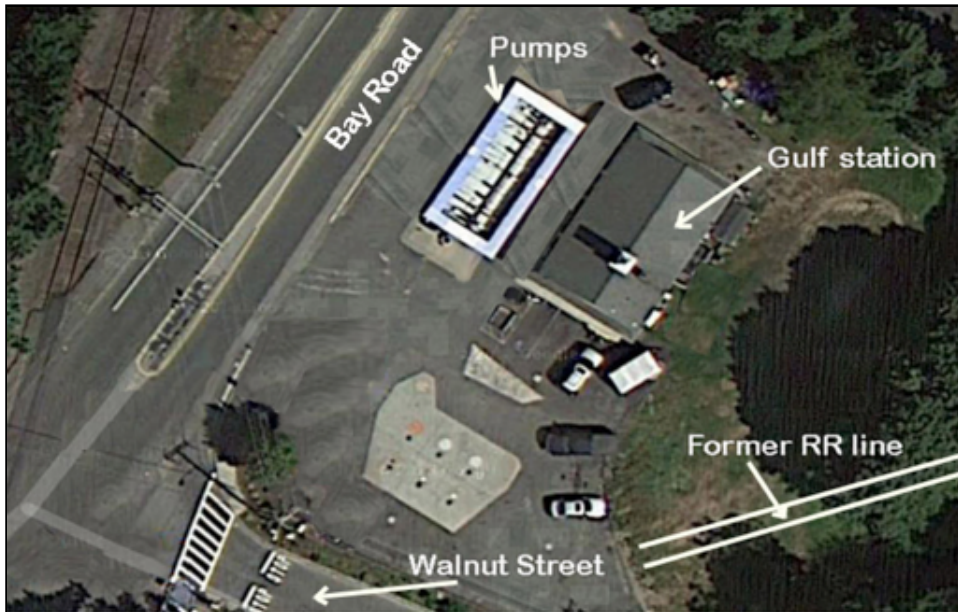
sold him, for \$1, the former Essex Branch railroad bed that ran through his property.<sup>14, 31</sup> Alongside Walnut Road, just up from Bay Road, a section of the old railroad bed remains visible. It is now the path for a natural gas pipeline, operated by Algonquin Gas Transmission.

Throughout the time the Haley's lived at the property, they had financial problems. To meet expenses, they rented either the first or the second floor during the 1940s and 30s. One of their early tenants was the Koll family, Morris and Fannie. He was a tailor, whose shop was on Railroad Avenue, near Robert Chittick's store.<sup>55</sup> As a teenager, Barbara Haley worked at the tailor shop.<sup>55</sup> An early renter was an elderly widow: unable to use the stairs to the upper floor, she occupied the first floor.<sup>5</sup>



Photo, J. Hauck, 2019





**Gulf station** and pumps were at the north side of the lot and fuel tanks were buried at south side, near Walnut St. Aerial, adapted from Google Maps, 2012.

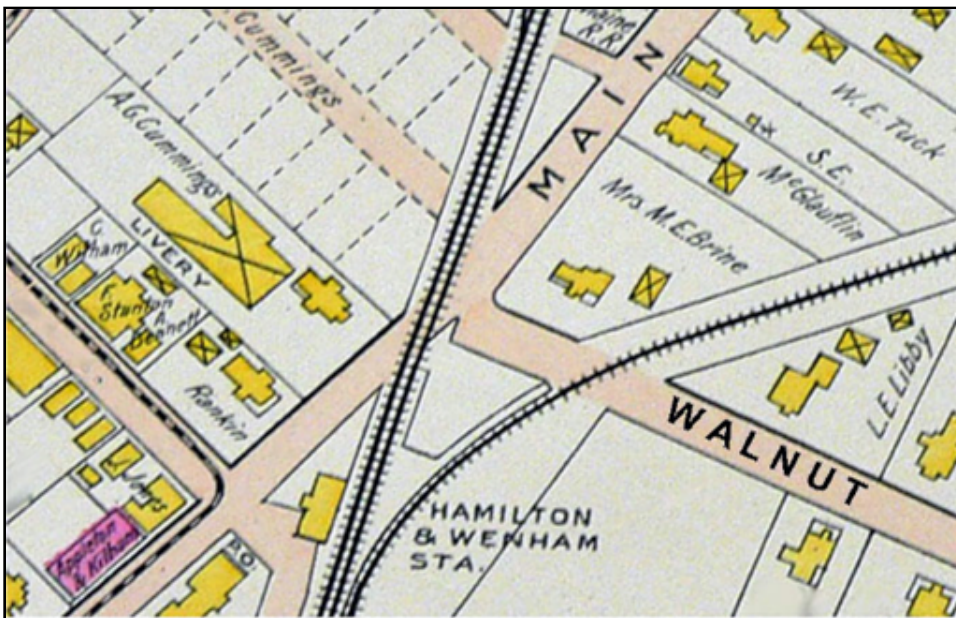
From 1935 to 1939, a time when the country was in the midst of the “great depression,” the Haleys lost ownership of the property, when they were unable to pay their 1934 real estate tax.<sup>7</sup> The Town of Hamilton took title to property. Salem Co-Operative Bank acquired the property from the town. The Haleys became renters in 1939, Doris Haley re-acquired the mortgaged property, by paying the \$323.46 in taxes due.<sup>15</sup>

The Haleys married on Dec. 2, 1930, in Rockport, MA.<sup>58</sup> It appears that Doris and her husband took residence at her father's house. A year later, 1931, their daughter, Barbara, was born.<sup>50</sup>

the foreman.<sup>5</sup>

He was very active in Hamilton's government, serving as a selectman, and was on the Board of Health, Board of Public Welfare, Cemetery Board, and Water Board, and he was a member of the Fire Department, and, at the time of his death, was the town treasurer.<sup>5</sup>

Those who remember Chuck Haley, say that he was dedicated to the town and, when discussing town matters, was always well informed. His talk was plain and direct to the point. They describe him as very tall and slender. He often was seen walking about town, in his work clothes, and having a brown, terrier-like dog, called Laddie, with him.<sup>4, 55</sup>



**Hamilton Crossing** created in 1839 when Eastern Rail-road passed through the town, crossing over Main Street. Essex Branch was built in 1872. Map, 1910 Ward Atlas.

Arthur Clark whose wife, Hattie had died in 1926,<sup>50</sup> remarried in 1930. His second wife was Sarah Morse. They were wed at St. Mary's Episcopal Church. She was the manager at the Rockmere Manor in Pigeon Cove, Rockport.<sup>55, 64</sup>

It appears that Arthur and Sarah Clark lived in Beverly.<sup>64</sup> He (b1858) died in 1932,<sup>55</sup> leaving his share of the house to his wife, Sarah. She, in 1932, gave her share of the property to Doris Haley.<sup>14</sup>

Everett Foss (*Chuck*) Haley was born (1902) in Rowley. His father was Cornelius F. Haley, a State Senator. As a young man, Chuck worked for the Town of Hamilton.<sup>55</sup> Next, in 1920, he began working at the Myopia Hunt Club and remained there until 1967, retiring as

Doris Haley inherited a share of the property from her mother, Hattie Clark.

In 1899, Harriet (*Hattie*) F. Merrill (b. 1876) married Arthur Watson Clark. She was the daughter George F. and Mary Merrill, of Wenham. Arthur Clark, was the son of Nathaniel L. Clark and Abigail Crane Merrill, who lived in Beverly.<sup>57</sup> Hattie and Arthur's daughter, Doris Elizabeth Clark, was born in 1902.<sup>9</sup>

Arthur Clark began working for the Eastern Railroad as a conductor and later became the baggage master at the Wenham railroad depot. He loaded and unloaded the bags and suitcases for passengers.



Hattie, beginning about 1910, ran a boarding house on the second floor and dining room on the first floor. Her dining room was one of the town's favorite places to eat. The food was not fancy, but was very tasty and the servings large. She offered freshly baked bread and "delightful desserts."<sup>4</sup>

An advertisement for the business stated, "Transients accommodated. Our 35¢ dinners a specialty."<sup>1</sup> (In 2013 dollars, this would be a little over \$6.)

Common to the time were transient workers. They performed various farm jobs for minimum pay and generally stayed in the town for a short time, before moving on.

Clark's boarding house and dining room was at a good location, close to the Eastern Railroad depot. Very likely, Arthur often guided arriving passengers to Hattie's dining room.

Hattie and Arthur had a tough time remaining in their home because of financial difficulties. During the sixteen years they owned the property, they frequently mortgaged it.

In 1926, Hattie became quite ill, and the boarding house and dining room were closed. She died the following year, and left the property jointly to her husband (Arthur) and daughter (Doris).

Hattie Clark acquired the property in 1906 from James A. Roome (1851-1930), a carriage builder in Peabody. She paid one dollar and "other considerations."<sup>29</sup> In the sales agreement, Roome's wife, Grace, released her dower rights to the property.<sup>19</sup>

Dower rights came from the English common law system and were followed in the colonies, continuing in Massachusetts well into the 19th century. A husband could not legally dispose of the land without his wife's written consent, for she had one-third interest in the property.<sup>17</sup>

James Roome bought the property, in 1896, from Elizabeth M. Brine, a widow, formerly from Peabody, and then living in Boston. The sale price was said to have been a dollar and "other valuable considerations."<sup>23</sup> (Terms used when buyer and seller do not disclose the sale



**Haley house, front**, in 1966, just prior to its demolishing for construction of Gulf gasoline station. Photo, B. Paradis

price.)

In 1894, while Brine was living at the house on Wenham Neck Road, the town renamed the street Walnut Road.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps people in Hamilton did not want the name Wenham to be a name for the street. (Even back then, relations between the towns were often strained.)

Elizabeth Brine was the widow of Charles W. Brine, who had owned a very successful carriage factory in Peabody. When her husband died (1883), Roome bought the business and ran the business until the mid 1920s.<sup>34</sup> As happened to buggy whips, horse-drawn carriages disappeared with the start of the age of automobiles.



**Back of Haley house** was where Chuck Haley had a garden and raised turkeys. Photo, B. Paradis

In 1885, Elizabeth Brine moved from Peabody to Hamilton following her husband's death and the sale of his business to Roome. She purchased the property (39,204 sq. ft.) from Emerson Porter Dodge (1815-1900), for \$400.<sup>16</sup>

In 1850, Dodge, while living in Boston with his wife, Priscilla Ann (*Rust*) (1825-1895), began buying large properties alongside the main road and railroad line running through Hamilton. Likely, he saw the land as good investments.

Railroad service came to the area when, in 1839, the Eastern Railroad extended its line from Salem through Wenham and Hamilton to Portsmouth, NH.<sup>1</sup> The line originated in East Boston.

Before the coming of the railroad, only a few houses were in the area near the Wenham town line. Hamilton center was further up Main Street between Bridge and Elm Street (*now Cutler Road*). Here, there was the general store, post office, blacksmith shop, cemetery, and church meeting-house.<sup>1</sup>

A shift in the location of the town center began in 1862, when the railroad depot was moved closer to the Wenham town line, to land owned by Thomas P. Pingree of Wenham. The opening of various shops in the area soon followed.

The original railroad depot was at the house of the depot master, Daniel Rust, about 170 Main St. (*now an office building*).<sup>1</sup>

A decade later, 1872, another major change came to this area: the Eastern Railroad built a short branch line from Hamilton to Essex. The railroad bought a four-rod (66 ft.) wide strip of land running through what is now the Cumberland Farms property,<sup>33</sup> as

well as other properties along the way to Essex.

The Essex Branch primarily provided a means for the ice harvesting companies on Chebacco Lake to transport their ice.<sup>1</sup> Ice harvesting ended in 1917, when fire destroyed the ice-storage houses.

Soon after the Essex Branch of the Eastern Railroad began operation, Wenham Neck Road was built from the Eastern Railroad line out to Larch Row in Wenham Neck.<sup>1</sup> (*Intersection of Dodges Row, Essex St., and Larch Row.*)

Based on the orientation of the Brine house on the property (*facing the corner of the property*), the house and barn likely were built after the Wenham Neck Road was built, i.e., after 1872.

Despite the loss of the ice hauling business in 1917, the Essex Branch line existed for another twenty-five years. In 1942, the Boston and Maine Railroad, which had acquired Eastern in 1884, shut down the Essex Branch. The rails were sold for use in World War 2.<sup>1</sup>

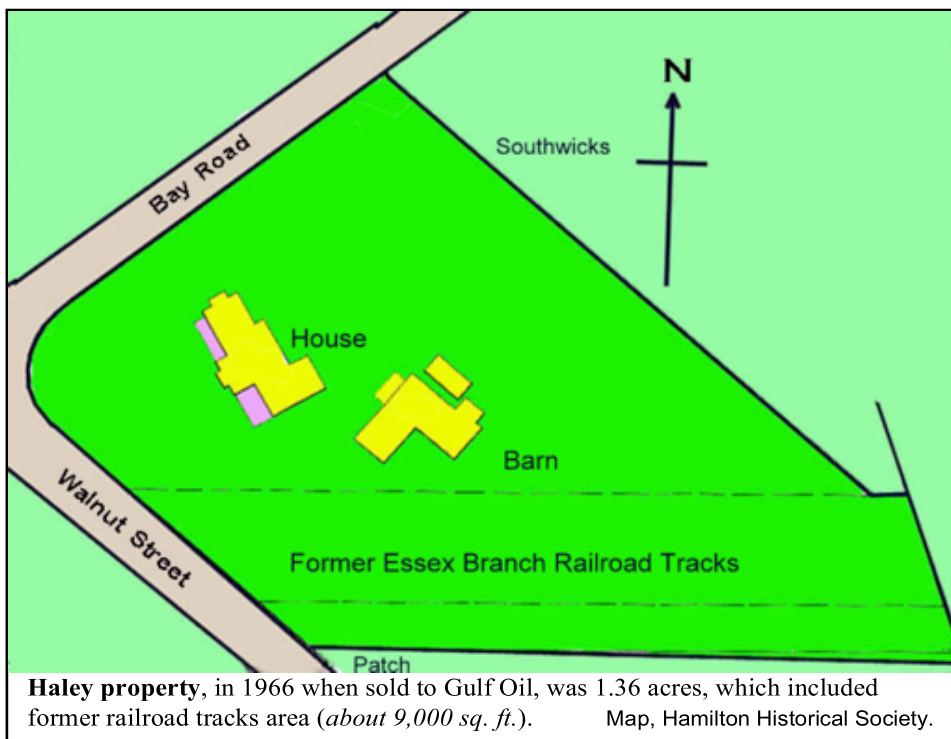
The land on the corner of Bay Road and Walnut Street originally was part of 8.75 acres acquired, in April 1850, by Emerson Dodge. He paid Benjamin Howard of Brookline \$1,100 for the property.<sup>28</sup>

Howard had not owned the property very long before the sale to Dodge. In March 1850, Howard bought a twenty-seven-acre farm from George and Samuel Foss.<sup>27</sup> (*Some eighty years later, a Foss descendent, Everett Foss Haley, would again own land in the area.*)

The deed from Foss detailed the property as, "Bounded southeasterly by land now or late of Quarles; southwesterly by land formerly of John Gardner, deceased; thence running westerly by said Gardner estate in front, thence on a straight line to the County Road; thence bounding northerly on said road to the point begun."<sup>17</sup>

Emerson Dodge remained living in Boston and leased the farm. Ten years later, 1860, he sold for \$225 a section of the former Foss land to the Eastern Railroad,<sup>38</sup> on which the railroad built a freight house, an engine turntable, an engine house and a windmill and water tank, next to the engine house.<sup>4</sup>

About two decades after his purchase of the Howard property, in 1872, Dodge sold the Essex Branch Railroad a strip of land through the property for a train track bed.<sup>33</sup> He received \$2,000. Thus, Dodge gained a profit of \$1,525 on his original investment of \$1,100, while still retaining a





large portion of the land he acquired from Benjamin Howard

Emerson and Priscilla were married on Jan. 3, 1846.<sup>24</sup> They moved to Hamilton in 1864, and lived on a portion of the former Foss farm that was on the east side of Liberty Street (*now Bay Road*).<sup>45</sup> Their address was 11 Walnut Rd.

Their move to Hamilton was not surprising: both Emerson and Priscilla were born in Wenham. His father was William Dodge, a seventh generation descendant of Richard Dodge, one of the town's first inhabitants.<sup>57</sup> Her father, Daniel Rust (1800-1856) was the station agent at the original Hamilton railroad depot. He married, in 1924, the widow Mehitabel (*Dodge*) Potter.<sup>13</sup>

Emerson Dodge was not the only out-of-towner buying land in Hamilton. Benjamin Howard, who lived in Brookline, received the property he sold to Dodge from his father, John Howard, in 1843. John Howard, who died in 1849, was a sail maker in Salem and former soldier in the Revolution.<sup>17</sup>

John Howard of Salem bought the property, in 1806, for \$143.75, from Thomas Brown (1849-1922), a tailor in Salem. The land was described as a "Parcel of Upland (*land above where flooding occurs*) and Mead (*grassland*) on land lying in Hamilton ... containing about eight acres and three quarters." It was alongside the "County Road."<sup>18</sup> In the deed, there is no mention of any structures on the property.

It may have been that Howard leased the property for farming. In the 18th and 19th centuries, there were non-slaveholding, small landowning investors, often called yeomen, allowed farmers to work their land for a share of the money brought in by the sale of the crops. The tenant farmers generally lived on the property, with their family.

Various other early settlers owned land that included what is now the Cumberland Farms station.<sup>18, 35, 36, & 37</sup> A map, created in 1976, of Wenham and Ipswich Hamlet (*now Hamilton*) shows where houses likely were in 1776. Several houses, in the area of what is now Bay Road and Walnut Street, were owned by John Lovering (1714-1793).<sup>2</sup>

The area originally was part of a very large estate owned by John Fairfield (1610-1646), one of the earliest settlers in the area.<sup>2</sup>

Who lived in this area before the Fairfields?

This was the tribal land of the Agawam Indians. When European settlers arrived, their chief was Masconomet. In June 1638, he sold all the Agawam land, under his rule, to John Winthrop, Jr., for twenty English pounds.<sup>8</sup>

Updated, J. Hauck, Aug. 13, 2019

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